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DATE: JULY 27, 2009

TO: Department of Justice, Registration Unit

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FROM: Qorvis Communications, LLC. (202) 496-1000

PAGE COUNT: 2 - (Including Cover Page)

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2009 JUL 28 PM 3:36
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KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT -IRAQ

عراق REPRESENTATION IN THE U.S.



حكومة تي هاري مي كوردستان -
نوينقراي تي لة ئامريكا

IRAQI KURDISTAN ELECTION HAILED AS EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY

Competitiveness and participation applauded by all parties and observers

Iraqi Kurdistan took another step along its road to democracy on July 25, when almost 80 percent of its population voted for parliamentary and presidential candidates in the most competitive election in the Region's history.

After turnout was estimated at 78.5 percent of the almost 2.5 million eligible voters, according to the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI), the national body in charge of running and tabulating the results. Polls were kept open an extra hour in some locations because of high turnout, IECI officials said.

"The electoral process took place in accordance with international standards," the IHEC said in a statement. Ballots were taken to IECI headquarters in Baghdad for processing and counting. Official results are expected in a few days.

The Kurdistan Regional Government expresses its deep appreciation for the thousands of Iraqi and international observers, as well as many international organizations, for their assistance with preparations and capacity building for the elections process. The KRG's goal was to have an election that met the gold standard for freedom, fairness and transparency, and we are proud that we exceeded those standards.

This weekend, the people of Iraq's Kurdistan Region went to the polls to elect their new Parliament and President. This achievement marked yet another milestone in the Region's development towards a democratic and transparent society. For that, we applaud their elected Congressmen Lincoln Davis (D-TN) and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-SC), co-chairs of the Kurdish American Congressional Caucus. "Their journey has not been easy, and errors have been made along the way. However, the Kurds have risen from the ashes of tyranny and are today building a thriving civil society in the heart of the Middle East."

Meanwhile, the Presidency of the European Union congratulated "the people of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region" on the elections. EU representatives followed the proceedings at polling stations across the region as well as through a long term electoral experts' mission. A preliminary assessment shows that the elections were held in a relatively competitive environment and were carried out in a secure manner," the EU said. "The high voter turnout shows the commitment of the voters to express their political will in a democratic way."

There were 509 candidates running from 25 parties or slates for 111 seats. The Chaldean-Assyrian-Syriac, Turkmen and Armenian constituencies are guaranteed 11 seats and at least 30 percent of the seats will go to women.

"It was a good process, fair and democratic," said Diyar Swara, an observer from Change List, told Niqash, a news group run by Media Cooperation and Transition, a non-profit media organization with offices in Berlin and Amman.

"We've been preaching democracy for decades, and here it is in action," said Safeen Dizayee, a spokesman for the Kurdistan List.

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